

Unemployment Insurance Updates

April 2016

The Department of Workforce Development (DWD) appreciates the vital role that our partners play in serving residents in communities across the state.

As part of our commitment to you and your employees' need to stay informed, DWD is **summarizing key changes** to Unemployment Insurance (UI) – including two that take effect in April 2016 – to help you serve your customers.

UI Online Filing Improvements	Ongoing
<p>Responding to our customers trending towards free, fast and easy online self-service, DWD has prioritized key enhancements to our online systems to file initial and weekly UI claims. These enhancements provide UI claimants with more opportunities to file a fast and accurate claim online, without any hold times, when and how it is convenient for them. Our online systems are mobile-friendly, providing secure access from any smartphone, tablet or computer.</p>	
<p>Key Highlights:</p> <p>Initial Claims Redesign, December 2014: DWD significantly upgraded our online initial claim filing system.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Added features allow 90% of claims started online to be completed online without the need to speak to a Claims Specialist. Claimants are able to save their work and finish their claim at a later time. New, easy to use employer search. Increased information collection, reducing the need to mail paper questionnaires to claimants. New user-friendly online help features. <p>Internet Weekly Claims Redesign, March/April 2016: Mimics the look and feel of the initial claim redesign.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Simplified questions and easy to understand help text. The ability to save the claim and return to complete later that day. New, easy to use work search and wage entry screens. An enhanced printable summary of the completed weekly claim. 	
<p>Additional Details:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> http://dwd.wisconsin.gov/ClaimsOnline (includes short video of weekly claims redesign) 	

Shift from Toll-free Phone Numbers to Free Online Filing and Local Phone Numbers	April 2016
<p>DWD is transitioning its telephone system from a call center model to a help center model, which allows customers the ease and convenience of more online self-services. The transition includes encouraging claimants to file online and shifting toll-free claims numbers to local Madison and Milwaukee phone numbers. This transition is in alignment with our customers' strong desire for more self-service online resources. Increased usage of online resources, coupled with declining federal funding for the UI program (over \$21 million since Federal Fiscal Year 2010), has reinforced the need to seek greater efficiencies in serving the public. Following the lead of several states responding to these trends, we are leveraging 21st century technology to be better stewards of UI funds.</p>	

Key Highlights:

- In November of 2015, DWD began informing customers of the upcoming change to provide ample opportunity for customers to become acquainted with our online services.
- In April 2016, UI is phasing out toll-free numbers. DWD will **continue to provide telephone-based claimant and employer services** using local phone numbers.

Phone Numbers:

Service	Toll-Free Number (Prior to April 2016)	Local Milwaukee and Madison Numbers
To File Initial Claim (new claim or reopen existing claim)	800-822-5246	414-438-7700 or 608-232-0678
To File Weekly Claim (for benefit payment)	800-978-7887	414-438-5395 or 608-261-9990
Information or Assistance (inquire about existing claim)	800-494-4944	414-438-7713 or 608-232-0824
Employer Assistance (for benefits/claimant eligibility)	800-247-1744	414-438-7705 or 608-232-0633

Additional Details:

- http://dwd.wisconsin.gov/uiben/telephone_services.htm (Recent Updates to Phone Services)
- <http://dwd.wisconsin.gov/uiben/services.htm> (Contact UI Benefit Staff)
- http://dwd.wisconsin.gov/ui/ui_contacts.htm (More UI Contacts)
- http://dwd.wisconsin.gov/dwd/publications/ui/ucb_17920_p.pdf (Contact Unemployment Flyer)

Guaranteed Call Priority**November 2015**

To further reduce caller wait times, DWD fully implemented Guaranteed Call Priority, or GCP last fall. GCP assigns specific days of the week for individuals to call based on social security number. Thursdays and Fridays are open to all callers.

Key Highlights:

- To help our customers avoid long telephone wait times, we have recently **assigned days** for callers to receive **priority service** based on social security number (SSN):

Monday	Last digit of SSN is 0-2
Tuesday	Last digit of SSN is 3-6
Wednesday	Last digit of SSN is 7-9
Thursday & Friday	All SSNs (Open to all callers which may result in longer wait times)

- NOTE: A claimant's claim will start in the week the claimant placed their first call. If a claimant calls and the system tells them to call back on their assigned day or Thursday/Friday, the system will still record their claim as having been started. They can complete their claim online or if instructed, call back (using the same telephone number) to complete their application.

Additional Details:

- http://dwd.wisconsin.gov/uiben/telephone_services.htm (Recent Updates to Phone Services)
- <http://dwd.wisconsin.gov/uiben/services.htm> (Contact UI Benefit Staff)

Work Search Validation	August 2015
DWD's Division of Unemployment Insurance (UI) now verifies the four work search actions of all UI claimants who are required to search for work <u>before</u> issuing payments.	
<p>Key Highlights:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Claimants who file their weekly claims online at my.unemployment.wisconsin.gov and are required to search for work must enter their work search logs directly into our system before submitting their claim. Their work search information is stored and validated through our online system prior to payment. • Nearly 80% of claimants who are required to search for work, file their weekly claims online to minimize potential delays in payment associated with having to fax or mail in the required work search contacts. • Claimants who file their weekly claim using the telephone and are required to look for work are required to MAIL or FAX a copy of the work search log for the week of the claim. <p style="text-align: center;"> Mail: PO Box 7905, Madison, WI 53707 or Fax: 608-327-6499 </p>	
<p>Additional Details:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • http://dwd.wisconsin.gov/uiben/handbook/english/contentspart4.htm 	

Work Search Waiver	June 2015
DWD, in June 2015, updated its system of waiving work-search requirements for claimants who expect recall from their employers.	
<p>Key Highlights:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Claimants who expect recall by their employer may seek a waiver of the weekly work-search requirement for an 8-week period that can be extended for a maximum of 4 additional weeks with verification from the claimant's employer. Until 2004, waivers were approved through the end of a benefit year, potentially 52 weeks, for a claimant who is not recalled. • The weeks of Thanksgiving, Christmas, and New Years are not automatically waived from work search. • Claimants who will start work with a new employer within 4 weeks need to provide employer verification in order to obtain a work search waiver. • Claimants working part time for a customary employer (an employer for which the claimant works for more than 4 weeks or the claimant worked at least 32 hours during a given week) may have their work search waived, but is required to register with Wisconsin Job Service through JobCenterofWisconsin.com and build a resume. 	
<p>Additional Details:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • http://dwd.wisconsin.gov/uiben/faq_waiver.htm 	